



Stella Maris Melbourne: providing remote medical assistance to stranded seafarers

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Stella Maris Seafarers' Centre in Melbourne has developed something of an unusual reputation amongst seafarers during the COVID pandemic.

According to Manager James McCully, it all started back in March when seafarers on vessels arriving into the Port of Melbourne were required to continue working well past their contract period, however they were not allowed to disembark. "We had one seafarer who was running low on his medication for high blood pressure. He felt unable to speak to his Captain about this, & so he sent us a message asking if it would be possible for us to help him."

"Our Chairman, Seamus Quinn, has a son who is a medical practitioner (Dr James Quinn), so we sought his advice. After providing evidence and script details from the seafarer, Dr James was able to provide a script to be dispensed here in Melbourne. The medicine was then delivered to the seafarer by Stella Maris staff."

This seems to have been the start of something quite unusual for Stella Maris, who – thanks to the seafarers' own very effective networks – has since been helping many seafarers arriving in Melbourne with emergency prescription medication needs. "From the initial request, we are now providing this very unusual but quite essential service to a different seafarer every few days" says Mr McCully, although he cautions that due to the checks required to authorise the medication, the staff at Stella Maris need a few days' advance notice.

For the seafarers who have been stranded on board their vessels for months, it is not hard to imagine that this unique but very essential service is of great relief to them.

For those visiting seafarers requiring assistance, they can make contact through the Stella Maris Facebook page or via email on melbourne@stellamaris.org.au



About Stella Maris

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre in Melbourne is a not-for-profit organisation and one of 353 centres worldwide providing pastoral care, services, and support for seafaring people.

Stella Maris centres are run by the Catholic Church through their global agency, the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS), providing pastoral care to all seafarers and maintaining the Stella Maris Centre as a support base. Ship visitors make primary contact with ships' crews and spend time assisting them in various tasks. Chaplaincy services are coordinated through Stella Maris and offered to seafarers upon request. Stella Maris buses travel to and from the docks constantly and provide a much-needed transport service for seafarers.

Due to the current COVID pandemic, Stella Maris has had to change its method of operation and now provides remote support services and care packages to crew visiting Melbourne.

For more information or interviews:

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